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In reply to Office Action mailed November 10, 2004
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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 10, 11, 20, 22, and 24 are pending in this application. Claims 20, 22 and 24 have been canceled. Claims 1, 10, and 11 have been amended. Claims 25-29 have been added. For at least the reasons stated below, Applicants assert that all claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 10, 11, 20, 22, and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Bergh et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,112,186), in view of *Sumita et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,907,836). Claims 1, 10 and 11 are amended; and claims 20, 22 and 24 are canceled. Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claims overcome this rejection.

The Office Action dated November 10, 2004, asserts that “[i]t would have been obvious to have repeated the filtering and determining steps in *Bergh* as in *Sumita* in order to generate enough ratings for the predetermined number of rating results of *Bergh*.” Step (g) of independent claims 1 and 11 and step (i) of independent claim 10 have been amended to recite “repetition of the filtering and determining steps automatically occurs until a sufficient quantity of user profiles similar to the user profile of the requesting user is generated such that accurate product statistics are obtained along several dimensions.” Applicants’ invention includes support for this amendment where it states an automated, computer generated result set based on both the number of results and the accuracy of the results when simultaneously considering several variables. *See* Specification pg. 82, lines 11-26; pg. 83, lines 1-4.

Neither of the cited references teach or suggest these limitations. *Bergh* is directed towards a user rating system that collects a number of subjective user ratings for calculating similarity factors between users and establishing neighboring users based on these similarity factors. *See Bergh* specification; Col. 2, lines 9-27. *Bergh* specifically teaches selecting a “predetermined number of users” based on a designated similarity factor. *See Bergh* specification; Col. 10, lines 39-42. Additionally, *Bergh* teaches selecting a “predetermined number of users” not meeting a designated similarity factor but at least meeting some other threshold factor, such as level of item rating. *See Bergh* specification, Col. 10, lines 42-54. *Sumita* describes an information filtering apparatus and method to determine the relativity of articles to present the articles to a user such that the user can easily recognize the relativity among the articles. *See Sumita* specification; Col. 2, lines 35-40. *Sumita* teaches urging the user to change the threshold of similarity between retrieved documents based on the results of the

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retrieval. *See Sumita* specification: Col. 55, lines 56-67; Col. 56, lines 1-10, lines 50-60.

Because this amended feature is neither shown nor suggested in each of the references, this feature cannot be found in any proposed combination of references.

The Office Action asserts "*Bergh* also teaches . . . creating a set of rating information and reporting the rating information." Additionally, step (h) of independent claims 1 and 11 and step (j) of independent claim 10 were amended to recite: "rating information from the second set of user profiles" and "product/service information from a content database including at least information about pricing from a variety of suppliers rated by the second set of user profiles."

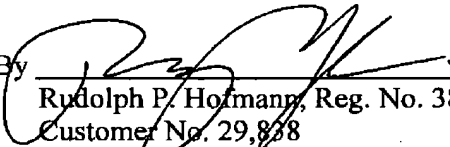
These features are neither shown nor suggested in the references and cannot be found in any proposed combination of references. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections based on 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

Applicants have added new claims 25-29. Claims 25-27 depend from claim 1, and claims 28-29 depend from claim 11. Based on the above remarks, claims 1 and 11 are patentably distinguishable from the prior art of record. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 25-29, by virtue of their dependency, are also patentably distinguishable from the prior art of record.

Applicants submit that all pending claims are now allowable and respectfully request that a Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes that a conference would be of value in expediting the prosecution of this application, the Examiner may reach the undersigned at (612) 607-7340.

Should any additional fees be necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge or credit any such fees or overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1901 (Reference 60021-302901).

Respectfully submitted,

By 
Rudolph P. Hofmann, Reg. No. 38,187
Customer No. 29,828

Oppenheimer Wolff & Donnelly, LLP
45 South Seventh St., Suite 3300
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1609
Telephone: 612-607-7340
Facsimile: 612-607-7100
E-mail: RHofmann@oppenheimer.com